

Music for Choir and Electronics

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ABSTRACT

Music for Choir and Electronics is a multi-movement work / collection of pieces for choir and electronics featuring: three songs, “Clear Midnight,” “Come Away, Death,” and “Alleluia” connected by two fixed media interludes, which utilize only electronic playback. While these pieces are presented as a group, they are also intended to stand on their own, as a means of introducing the use of electronics in “classical music” to as wide an audience as possible – especially the choral music world. This supporting paper contains: my thoughts, goals, and intentions on the composition(s), program notes for the piece as a five-movement work or as individual smaller pieces, a breakdown of a few decisions I made regarding the incorporation of electronics – from a logistical and technological standpoint, a discussion of a choral recording session held for the three songs in Spring 2017, and my final thoughts on the overall project and moving forward as a composer of acoustic, electronic, and electroacoustic music.

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Chapter 1: Introduction / Overview

As I approached the concept of doing a work for choir and electronics many compositional hurdles came to mind. How would the audience at a choral concert react?... How would the ensemble react? I've written for choir and voice before, as well as electronics, but to incorporate these elements in the same work I was a bit unsure about what to do. I decided to think of this work as a project, instead of a monumental work in my portfolio – with the goal of helping introduce electronics and electroacoustic music to a new audience. Rather than composing something difficult and complex, I decided to aim, compositionally, for the performance level of a young college choir – thinking this would help give my work the biggest reach regarding potential future performances.

Because of this, I wanted to explore what would be possible for me, as a composer, but remain realistic in terms of performances logistics. I cannot expect choirs to have access to a lot of tech and nor should they have to have it. Eventually, I settled on the use of just a stereo audio track that would accompany the choir – something that could be handled with the use of a smart phone and a set of speakers... at the very least. With that said, there is certainly the option to use versions with click-tracks, if needed. However, this does add the need for a computer, audio interface, software to split the audio channels – (a stereo export (1 and 2) to the speakers, and an isolated channel (3) for the click track which would be sent to), headphones for the conductor, and finally someone to manage and set up all the tech. The last bit is always something that should always be on the mind of a composer of electroacoustic music. This requirement, for someone to

manage the tech, seemingly always falls on the composer, which could require them to be in attendance for most performance. This is something that I didn't want restricting performances.

My next decision was to think, "What, as a young composer, can I do to increase the chance of getting performances?" In truth, I didn't want a large piece of music to just remain on my shelf because I had scored it in such a way in would be difficult to program. For this, I decided to conceive this work / project in a modular sense. That is, I wanted each individual movement to be able to stand on its own, as well as function as a part of the larger work. Taking this one step further, I made a few changes to the instrumentation, but these are completely optional. "Clear Midnight" has the addition of a bass drum, but this can be included in the electronic track or performed on stage with the choir. "Come Away, Death" allows for a vocal soloist or this solo line could be divided amongst the choir. Finally, the "Alleluia's" electronic track was composed in such a way that an organ or keyboard could be substituted in lieu of electronic playback.

After this, I still needed a way to link these three songs together. I made the choice to compose two fixed media interludes, an interlude and postlude to be exact, that only utilize stereo electronic playback, - thinking I could submit these individual movements / pieces to calls for electronic works, festivals, and conferences. By including these movements, that do not require performers, I felt that I would have the best chance of gaining more performances from this project to add to the ever-important C.V. - that young composers so desperately need.

Chapter 2: Thoughts, Goals, and Intentions

2.1 – “Clear Midnight”

This was certainly the most difficult movement to compose. As a fan of Walt Whitman, I wanted to include some text, but I did not want this to imply the work’s form, rhythm, or melody. For this, I rearranged the text ending on “wordless” thinking this would give me a prime opportunity to use the electronic as a focal point. When reflecting on the text, I saw Whitman’s words as introspective and internal. Taking this into consideration, I did not see the need for this setting to be large and bombastic, but one of meditation. Though the electronics are present throughout much of the piece, they never aim to distract or “scare” the audience. Even when the electronics become the focal point, they are never intended to convey nothing more than a meditative soundscape despite getting louder.

2.2 – “Interlude:1882”

“Interlude:1882” is the first of the solo fixed media pieces included in this set. This movement’s title comes from a connection to the publication years of Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, in which “Clear Midnight” was included. Though this movement could be described as ambiguous, atmospheric, or spacey – I feel it adds to the introspective tone introduced in the first movement. Knowing that I would be composing two fixed media pieces, I wanted this one to be calm, meditative, and slightly rhythmic. I wanted to save the energy and bombasticness for the other fixed media movement. With

that said, I took the term “interlude” as a means of connecting two sections. In this piece, the spacey, shiny sounding, quasi-arrhythmic beginning slowly transforms to something new revolving around a steady percussive pulse at the end

2.3 – “Come Away, Death”

Approaching what would be the middle movement of this collection, again I did not want a loud bombastic movement. I saw this movement as an opportunity to experiment with texture. Typically, in electroacoustic works – the electronic component can fall into two categories: one where the electronics are metered and play a role that requires temporal accuracy or a role that revolves around texture and the creation of a soundscape where timing is not so crucial.

In this movement, I wanted the soundscape style electronics, but I also wanted the choir to add to this texture. I aimed to explore how each entity could contribute to the overall composite texture of the work. In terms of the overall five movement work, I wanted the middle movement to provide a flat point for which the fourth and fifth movement could build upwards from.

2.4 “Postlude:1602/1623”

I’ve been interested in electronic dance music for a long time, but I always hesitate to incorporate its elements into a concert work. Here, I’ve gotten past that inhibition. My goal here was an original work - utilizing concrete sounds, strong rhythmic grooves, synthesizers and more. Essentially, I wanted to merge the two genres

of academic electronic music and popular electronic music. The title for this movement, as abstractly as I can be, comes from two ideas - the 1602/1623 is a reference to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in which "Come Away, Death" is found and Postlude comes from the connection to Interlude, but also in terms of how this movement was constructed formally. Most lengthy popular music electronic pieces I think off fall into a simple A – B form. Because of this, I based my piece around one idea, and then just attached a totally different section for the ending. This ending section is a repurposing of material from the fifth movement, "Alleluia."

2.5 "Alleluia"

For this setting, I wanted to use a text that was simple and non-poetic. After struggling with various Latin words – thinking I would write a Credo or something, I settled on using "Alleluia." Again, this movement centers around two sections. One section is very much a march-like lament, while the other is a more upbeat and dare I say happy section – I've always felt the term "Alleluia" has usage in times of sorrow as well as times of rejoice so I wanted to connect these ideas.

Also, I did not want to use some complex, overindulgent, form of harmony, but I wanted to rely on simplicity. The first section uses a repetitive accompaniment – I felt this would be an easy way to add to the feeling of sorrow. The second section follows a I-vi-IV-V chord progression. In doing this, I wanted this second section to just exist. I did not feel the need to prove myself as a composer. With that said, I do feel as though the ending of this piece is the one of the happiest I've been with my compositions.

Chapter 3: Program Notes

Individual Movements

Clear Midnight begins with a short introduction as the choir presents a motive that slowly becomes the central idea for much of the piece. As electronics are added, manipulated guitar, voice, metal, glass and ocean sounds slowly build and work their way to the forefront of the piece as the choir takes on a “wordless” role, abandoning Walt Whitman’s text, pushing towards a loud ending.

Interlude:1881 is a work for fixed media that draws on shoveling textures, shimmering metallic sounds, and other various types of repeated tones. As the piece opens, many natural sounds may be heard, but they are quickly consumed in an ever-growing texture. Throughout the various sections, new harmonies are layered over top sounds that begin to bend. After, a moment of stillness, a driving percussive motion leads to an upward lift as the piece pushes to a close.

Come Away, Death is an exploration of musical texture, but through the simplest means. The electronics tracks provide a grounding through found sounds, moving filter, and electronic effects. The choir, providing harmonic support, slowly follows the melody and contributes to the overall texture through use of wordless syllables. The piece is stagnant, only adding to the feeling of longing.

Postlude:1602/1623 includes many different things I love about electronic music: rhythmic grooves, harmony, synthesizers, and manipulated sounds. Beginning with short

bursts of fireworks – recorded from an ocean front show, the piece grows to include many different rhythmic patterns before harmony is finally introduced. The layers slowly seem to melt as the piece begins to calm and texture starts to predominate through remnants of melodies and other previously heard sounds. This pushes the piece forward as it begins to build again, reaching a climax where new trance like rhythms is all that remains as the piece ends.

Alleluia begins as a slow melancholy march that gives way as the somber nature of the piece transforms into something more peaceful. The slow march is replaced with reoccurring rhythmic figures in the accompaniment to add a more uplifting feeling.

For the entire piece

Completed in 2016, *Music for Choir and Electronics* is a work for choir and electronics that focuses on an introspective journey – beginning melancholy, somber and atmospheric, eventually transforming and ending with peace, and happiness. I have included the various things I love most about electronic music, including manipulated sounds, found sounds, atmospheric textures, rhythmic grooves, and synthesizers.

Walt Whitman’s “Clear Midnight” has always been an interesting text for me. While working on this piece, I was experiment with rotating and rearranging text. In rearranging the text of “Clear Midnight,” I ended with the word “wordless,” and at this time the electronics become the focal point of the piece. This leads into the first of two completely electronic movements, *Interlude: 1882* where texture and atmospheric electronic sounds begin to build and push into the next movement - *Come Away, Death*.

Taking its text from William Shakespeare's "Come Away, Death," this movement includes electronic texture, but the choir shifts into the background – providing seemingly random syllables to create a chaos of sounds of consonants and vowels as a solo vocal line moves the movement through a static texture. An energetic "*Postlude: 1602/1623*," follows, to approach the last movement, "Alleluia." Looking back at the somber tone of the first movement, "Alleluia," eventually transforms at its climax to convey more peaceful and seemingly happy feeling.

Chapter 4: Use of Electronics

Throughout the last three years, I've become more and more interested in electronic composition. Though I have mainly written for solo electronic playback, I do have a few pieces for guitar and electronics, as well as a few open instrumentation, improvisational, pieces that include electronics as well. My first electronic piece, "Steel Wheels," is a two-channel fixed media work completed in 2014. In this work, I use found sounds, which I then manipulate in Audacity and Logic Pro – eventually hosting the entire piece in Logic Pro. My major professor at the time encouraged his students to capture live sounds, edit them free of distortion, manipulate them, create variations, and then name them. Then, once enough sounds are gathered – you can start composing. Since then, my compositional process has changed. I feel I have become a bit more imaginative with what I can make from sounds, and a bit more acquainted with the tools of electronic composition.

During this project, I used Ableton Live to host, compile and manipulate sounds, Audacity to edit, Native Instruments' Kontakt for a few software instruments, and Native Instruments' Massive for some digital synthesis. The found sounds used come from numerous trips and events between the Summer of 2015 and Fall 2016, these include, but not limited to: a family vacation, the remnants of some craft projects I had started, a few sound design sessions I did at my parents' house... where I would essentially break stuff, and finally just some wandering around outside.

The following is a discussion, of each individual movement, detailing my thought process as I approached incorporating electronics into this project.

4.1 – “*Clear Midnight*”

The first movement, “Clear Midnight,” is by far the most complex in terms of the fixed media / electronic incorporation. While a bit technical, I still wanted the piece to be performable without a click track, however, I admit – this is most likely not going to be the case due to a few tricky sections of silence or minimal activity in the electronics during the movement, which could make for some awkward situations during a performance.

“Clear Midnight” begins with the choir, somewhat freely in time, unaccompanied for the first seven measures. This is the first place to consider in terms of the electronics. My intention to use only an mp3 track to accompany the choir can cause a bit of a problem if not handled correctly. With the first seven bars requiring no sound from the electronic track, I felt that adding seven bars of silence at the beginning of the piece did not seem very wise. To get around this, I simply removed the first seven bars of silence in the electronic track, and placed a cue in the score for someone to start the electronic playback in measure 8. My thought was that this would allow the choir some freedom with the opening material, and this would allow the electronics to be cued and started when needed. The cue for this is shown in figure 4.1.

2

7 8 ♩ = 76

S *f* *p*
stars si -

A *f* *p*
stars si -

T *f* *p*
ful - ly forth

B *f* *mf* *p*
Thee ful - ly forth

B. Dr.

Start Playback

Elect. *p*
ppp

Figure 4.1 “Clear Midnight” mn. 7 – 9.
Electronic Playback starts.

My concern to have everything line up rhythmically could be handled with a click track, and I’ve mentioned this concern in the opening part of this section. The inclusion of a click track would ensure that everything lines up as the electronics enter at measure 8, but the click would need to be sent to the conductor before this measure. I could start the piece with it, stay strictly in time, losing some freedom with the choir, or I could start the click around measure 6 – which would make things a bit awkward for the conductor. Regardless, using a click track would still require someone to start the track for the conductor – and I wanted the freedom given to the choir at the beginning. Thus, having

the conductor cue someone on the downbeat of measure 8, to start the electronics, seemed like the easiest and most conducive way to get what I wanted.

The next section of this movement to focus on is when the electronics move to the foreground of the movement. It is worth mentioning again that in this movement I rotated Whitman's text allowing me to end on the word "wordless."

The image shows a musical score for measures 35 to 42 of the piece "Clear Midnight," specifically the "Wordless" section. The score is written for a choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and electronics. The choir parts are in G major, with lyrics "the word - less" repeated across the measures. The electronics part features a piano (p) and a moving glass break (f) in the right hand, and a piano (p) and a moving glass break (f) in the left hand. The score is marked with a 6/8 time signature and a key signature of one sharp (F#). A box containing the number 40 is located above the Soprano part in measure 40. The score is labeled with "S", "A", "T", "B", "B. Dr.", and "Elect." on the left side.

Figure 4.2 "Clear Midnight" mn. 35 – 42.
"Wordless"

At this point in the piece and until the end, the choir no longer uses words from the text – only vowel syllables. The rhythms have become simple and meter changes are gone. Because of section, I felt it was not necessary to have a click track – as the rhythms

in the electronics are also simply enough to provide a consistent pulse which should be easy to for the choir to follow.

4.2 – “Interlude:1882”

With this piece being solely electronic playback, nothing much is difficult to discuss. In the grand scheme of things, as I was working on this project– I envisioned, all the electronic tracks placed in a playlist. So, that after “Clear Midnight,” began at measure 8, and then ended, this movement would start immediately. This would give the choir a short break, and as this movement ends – the third movement, “Come Away, Death,” would start.

4.3 – “Come Away, Death”

“Come Away, Death,” falls in the middle of this five-movement set. There are numerous good settings of this text, mostly art songs, including those of Gerald Finzi and Roger Quilter. There are also some choral settings, one that I did find somewhat interesting is by Alex Burtzos. This version is scored for choir, countertenor and harp, it stretches out the text so much that it becomes choir takes on the role of texture. I borrowed a bit from this idea.

So, when I approached my setting – I knew I wanted to experiment with texture. The electronics accompaniment consists of several sounds layered on top of one another and timbre evolves just by altering the mix of sounds. Though the electronic track has a fixed duration – it does not dictate the length of the piece / movement. The choir is given a set of instructions, whereas they also provide a textural accompaniment to a soloist.

The solo may be, if desired,
broken up between various singers.

Slow Rhythms ad lib

Solo *mf* Come a - way Come a - way

Soprano *p* Ah

Alto *p*

Tenor *p*

Bass

Electronics *pp* Texture *p*

All voices freely ad lib crescendo and decrescendo. This should be done individually, and not as a section - as to create a shimmering effect. Voices may also freely drop in and out. Once again, individually and not as a section. The dynamic range (pp – mp)

Figure 4.3 “Come Away, Death” mn. 1 – 6.
“Opening”

After the initial opening 12 measures, the choir receives another set of instructions

12

Solo and in sad cy - press

S *p*

A

T *p*

B

Throughout the rest of the piece, ad lib syllables / words from the solo line around the current measure.

Figure 4.4 “Come Away, Death” mn. 12 – 16.
“Choir Texture”

With the choir and electronics providing texture, the actual pace of the piece is determined by the soloist. This could potentially could cause some issues on ending the movement. For this, additional instructions are added at the end.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Come Away, Death". It features a vocal line and three electronic staves. The vocal line has lyrics "To weep there!" and a dynamic marking *p*. The electronic staves have dynamic markings *pp* and *pp*. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

If the solo finishes before the electronics end, the electronics may be faded out or left on for the duration of the piece. Conversely, if the electronics finish before the text, the electronic portion may remain silent.

Figure 4.5 "Come Away, Death" mn. 136 – 138.
"Ending note"

4.4 "Postlude:1602/1623"

With this movement being another solo electronic work, stereo playback is all that is required, and could tie in nicely as a playlist following "Come Away, Death" provided the electronic is allowed to play out for its full duration.

4.5 “Alleluia”

During some pre-composition, I knew I wanted the electronic element to be different from what I had done in the preceding movements. At the time, I had been studying the choral music of Stephen Paulus and decided that I wanted to incorporate organ somehow. This also played into the idea I had regarding performability, and logistical concerns. One thing that came to mind, – with a lot of performance of choral music occurring in churches... their sound system might not be the best. Because of this, I decided to compose this piece in such a way that organ could cover the electronic part. Thus, I composed what could be considered a synthesized backing track. This could need a click track, but the organ part is so rhythmically consistent, it might not be needed.

For the electronic track, I wanted to try and incorporate some organ-like ideas. Knowing that organ can change its timbre by adding and removing stops, I was thinking of how I could use this, but utilize the electronic medium. So, I decided on composing the electronic accompaniment with just one synthesized sound. Then, after completing that – I went back and automatized the synthesizer so it will gradually change throughout the entire movement. This would be something an organ could not do. The start and end of this automation can be seen in Figures 4.6 and 4.7

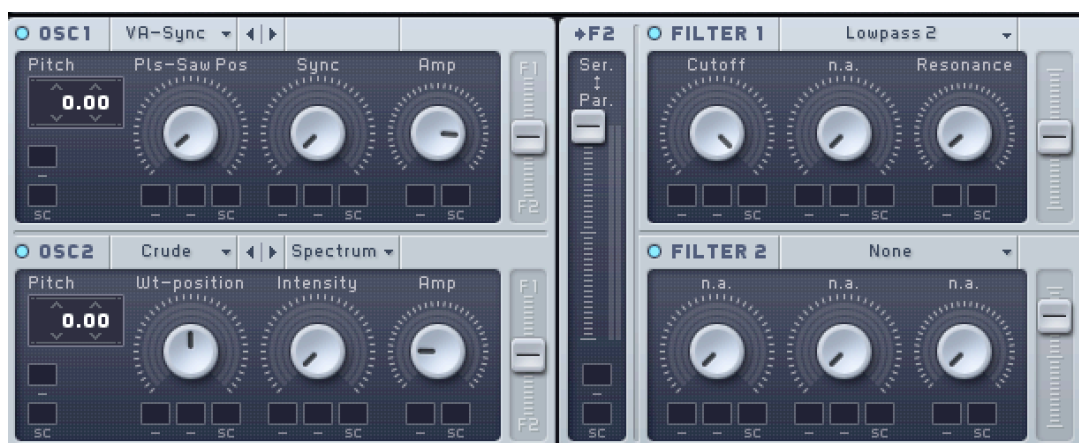


Figure 4.6 “Alleluia” mn. 1.
“Starting synthesizer automation”



Figure 4.7 “Alleluia” mn. 76.
“Ending synthesizer automation”

Having the choir and electronics line up rhythmically for this movement is a bit easier here. There is no cue to start the electronics. The accompaniment starts with a somewhat simple pattern and the choir joins in at measure 7.

♩ = 76

mf

Soprano

Al - le - lu - ia

mf

Alto

Al - le - lu - ia

Tenor

8

Bass

mp

Electronics
or Organ

Figure 4.8 “Alleluia” mn. 1-8.
“Choir joins accompaniment”

Chapter 5: Recording Session

This portion of this project came to fruition because of a friend, Jack Vishneski – who has connections with the Minneapolis based choir MPLS. I knew Jack when he was a student University of Minnesota, but that is not the reason for this collaboration. Jack is an assistant to the Twin Cities composer Carol Barnnet and through my connections working with the American Composers Forum and my job working with the family of Stephen Paulus – I know Carol as well. After I mentioned my project to her, she gave a great recommendation on how well Jack is at organizing things, and said I should have him help me along with this.

After telling Jack my idea, he put me in contact with Samuel, Sam, Grace, the artistic director with MPLS who agreed to have MPLS take on the project, and Jacob

Manier at Saint Paul's Church on Lake of the Isle, who allowed us the use of the church to complete the recordings. Next, I contacted Mike Duffy, our own School of Music Tech Support, to help manage the recording. While I am perfectly capable of doing this, I did not want to have this on my mind during the recording session, and honestly, I wanted someone better to do the job. I wanted my role to just be that of the composer.

I should break here and mention all parties involved in this were paid. I felt this was necessary not only for me to be taken seriously as a composer, but to respect everyone's time, and ensure that this project is handled professionally on all fronts. After taking care of all this, and making sure all the details were set – the project moved forward. I booked Saint Paul's Church on Lake of the Isle for a total of 15 hours, MPLS agreed to 8.5 hours of rehearsal time and 6.5 hours for the recording session for my fourteen or so minutes of music, and Mike Duffy would be present for the 5 hours of recording time at Saint Paul's Church on Lake of the Isle. In short, this combination of hours would all occur over the weekend of March 31st, 2017 to April 2nd, 2017.

April 1st was the first time I heard these pieces live. MPLS had rehearsed them together for the first time the night before, and came in and were fantastic. We ran "Alleluia" first everything was great on my end. "Clear Midnight" was next. For this piece, I was unsure about how I wanted the ending in terms of vowels and consonants sounds. The choir had practiced with "Ooo" and some "Ah"s. I originally had the idea to mix vowels and consonants – so, I wanted to try that. So, Sam gave the members of the choir different vowels and consonants and we ran the ending a few times. I ended up liking this version. Then, we rehearsed "Come Away, Death" for a bit before lunch. The

choir had practiced the piece using an “ng” sound, but we spent some time allowing the ensemble to choose different sounds for the texture.

MPLS used this rehearsal to bring in some of their big donors. This was to give them a bit of a behind the scenes look at how they rehearse and show them the types of new music they are interested in. So, we had lunch and I gave a short talk to the choir and donors about myself, my project, and my hopes for the pieces. After lunch, the donors were invited to the afternoon rehearsal where they could hear the pieces and ask Sam about the choir, and me about the pieces. I should add, this was a fantastic experience.

On April 2nd, I arrived at the church at 12:30pm alongside Jack and Mike. We spent some time discussing the setup and got everything ready to go. Then, the choir arrived around 1:30pm. The idea was to have the electronics playing into the space, but at a low enough volume that they could be dubbed in. This caused a bit of trouble with “Alleluia.” Even though the piece is simple, the choir seemed to rely on hearing the track for timing quite a bit. In anticipation of this, I had created a click tracks for the movement. Once Sam had the click in his ear, everything seemed to line up. The singers had a few dodgy entrances, but we took our time, and got good takes so it all could be pieced together later.

“Clear Midnight” was the most challenging to record. Since I was there, I could control cueing the electronics, but this was a bit of struggle. During the rehearsal the previous day, there was no problem, but I guess recording made it a bit awkward for Sam and myself to line everything up perfectly. Nevertheless, with the use of a click track we recorded everything in time. We did takes just of the beginning before the electronics

entered, takes starting directly with the electronics, takes of the ending with and without electronics, and many other areas.

“Come Away, Death” was done in one take. However, we did record various elements of the piece without electronics – so I could have something to play around with when editing in the electronics. Since this movement’s electronics is just a soundscape, I had some freedom in customizing the electronic track for the recording. MPLS had requested a thunderclap on the last note the soloist sings. I agreed.

We ended around 4pm after two and a half hours of recording. Even though we had recorded what would turn into thirteen or so minutes of music. I was exhausted. Looking back, it was a great experience as a young composer to have that much time to work with a choir. I learned quite a bit as to how I would run recording sessions in the future as the composer. As a student composer, I’m just used to the long takes and such that I get from large ensemble readings, but to have completely control – I didn’t know what all to do, and have any good strategy. I like to think after this experience, I have a good idea on what to do for the next one.

The following day, April 3rd, I spent in Mike Duffy’s office as Mike edited everything. I was there to give feedback and direction on what I liked and what sound I wanted, and Mike was faster at using Logic Pro to get everything together and he was also another set of ears to check the mix. In the end, after about 4 hours of editing everything came together, and the recordings were completed.

Chapter 6: Final Thoughts and Moving Forward

As I finish this project I can safely say that I am happy with the way things have turned out. I'm glad I had the opportunity to explore this thesis / dissertation as a project more so than a large piece I will never get much use out of. Already within a few months of completing these pieces, "Interlude:1882" was selected as part of the 2017 New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival. So, in a sense – I can say that this project was already successful.

When I made the decision to center this project on pieces for choir and electronics, I knew I would need to produce recordings of these pieces if I hoped for future performances. Where most dissertation and thesis pieces end, after the musical score is finished, I've had to communicate, facilitate, and help organize the recording session for these songs, with the Minneapolis based choir MPLS, – this is something I feel most student composers in academia are not tasked with anymore. I think most student composers compose a piece, struggle to get a mediocre performance – in which they gain nothing from it, and then move on not looking back. With my project, I aimed to compose pieces I am happy with and produce a quality recording of them – so I would have something worthwhile to show and use as I push for future performances of these pieces.

As I move forward as a composer, I am more convinced now more than ever that I need more than just a score to show for my music. This started to become clear when I began composing electronic music in 2014. Because of the electronic medium, I already

had recordings of actual sounds, rather than ridiculous MIDI playback. To this, my music was being selected for more festivals and calls seemingly much easier than before.

I still enjoy composing electronic music and acoustic music, and will probably continue in the merger of the two with electroacoustic music, but I understand the needs that come along with this. I will need clear musical scores, easily understandable directions, and recordings to give a representation of the piece. The undertaking of this project has guided me through what is needed as I approach composing new electroacoustic works and working with ensembles who are not accustomed to performing works with electronics. Once again, I would say this entire project is successful as I have gained far more than what I would have by composing a large extended orchestral piece.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Text

“A Clear Midnight” – Walt Whitman (Leaves of Grass)

Original	Rotated
This is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless, Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done, Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes thou lovest best, Night, sleep, death and the stars.	Night, sleep, death and the stars. Thee fully forth emerging, silent, gazing, pondering the themes thou lovest best, Away from books, away from art, the day erased, the lesson done, This is thy hour O Soul, thy free flight into the wordless,

“Come away, come away, death” – William Shakespeare (Twelfth Night, Act 2, Scene 4)

Come away, come away, death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid.
Fly away, fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,
O, prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet,
On my black coffin let there be strown.
Not a friend, not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown.
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O, where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there!

“Alleluia”

Alleluia

APPENDIX B: Musical Scores

A Clear Midnight

For SATB Choir, Bass Drum, and
Fixed Media

Text by: Walt Whitman

Zack Pentecost

$\text{♩} = 76$ *Freely*

p

Soprano
Night ____ Night ____ Night ____ Night ____ Night ____ the

Alto
Night ____ Night ____ Night ____ Night ____ Night ____ and

Tenor
p
Sleep ____ Death ____ and the stars ____

Bass
p
Sleep ____ Death ____ stars ____

Bass Drum

Electronics

$\text{♩} = 76$

For Rehearsal Only
p

A Clear Midnight

2

8 ♩ = 76

7

S *f* *p*
stars si - lent si - lent pon-der - ing the

A *f* *p*
stars si - lent si - lent pon-der - ing the

T *f* *p*
ful - ly forth e - merg - ing - gaz - ing the themes -

B *f* *mf* *p*
Thee ful - ly forth e - merg - ing - gaz - ing the themes -

B. Dr.

Elect. Start Playback
p *p*
ppp

8 ♩ = 76

mf *p*

*Smaller noteheads are approximated rhythms

A Clear Midnight

3

13 *mf* *p* *mf* **15**

S themes thou love best a - way from books the day e -

A themes thou love best a - way from books the day e -

T — thou love best a - way from art the day e -

B — thou love best a - way from art the day e -

B. Dr. 6/4 4/4 6/4 4/4

Elect. *ppp* *mf*

15

mf *p* *mf*

The musical score is for a piece titled "A Clear Midnight". It features four vocal parts: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). The lyrics are: "themes thou love best a - way from books the day e -". The score includes dynamic markings: *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano). There are also performance instructions: *ppp* (pianissimo) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score is divided into measures, with a box containing the number 15 indicating a specific measure. The B. Dr. (Bass Drum) part is shown in 6/4 and 4/4 time signatures. The Elect. (Electric) part includes a *ppp* section and an *mf* section. The piano accompaniment at the bottom includes *mf* and *p* markings.

A Clear Midnight

4

18 20

S *raised* *p* *mf*
The les-son done The les-son done This is

A *raised* *p* *mf*
The les-son done This is

T *raised* *p* *mf*
The les-son done The les-son done The les-son done

B *raised* *p* *mf*
The les-

B. Dr.

Elect. *ppp* *mf*

20 *p* *mf*

The musical score is written for a vocal quartet (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass), a Drummer (B. Dr.), and an Electric Piano (Elect.). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system starts at measure 18 and ends at measure 20. The second system starts at measure 20 and ends at measure 24. The vocal parts have lyrics written below them. The electric piano part has dynamic markings *ppp* and *mf*. The drum part is indicated by a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and slurs.

5

30

A Clear Midnight

6

35 40

S *f*
the word - less

A *f*
the word - less

T *f*
the word - less

B *f*
the word - less

B. Dr.

Elect. *f* Moving Glass Breaks *p* *ppp* *mf*

40

f

A Clear Midnight

7

43 45 48

f

Ah

f

Oo

S

A

T

B

B. Dr.

ff

f

Elect.

End Glass

ff

mf

Heavy Rain

Reversed talking

45 48

f

A Clear Midnight

8

52

S

Ah Ah Ah

A

Oo Ah Ah Ah

T

f

Ah Ah

B

f

Ah Ah

B. Dr.

Elect.

Ocean

mf

f

The musical score is arranged in a system with five staves. The vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are in treble and bass clefs. The B. Dr. staff is a single line. The Elect. staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The lyrics are written below the vocal staves. Dynamics like *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte) are indicated. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and accidentals.

9

34

A Clear Midnight

10

62

S *ff* Ah

A *ff* Ah

T *ff* Ah

B *ff* Ah

B. Dr. *p* *ff* *ffz*

Elect. *mf* *mf* *mf* *ff*

The musical score is written for a vocal quartet (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass), a B. Dr. (Bass Drum), and an Elect. (Electric Piano). The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score begins at measure 62. The vocal parts (S, A, T, B) all sing the word 'Ah' in a sustained, powerful tone, marked with *ff* (fortissimo). The B. Dr. part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, marked with *p* (piano) and *ff* (fortissimo). The Elect. part features a complex, fast-moving pattern of chords and single notes, marked with *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *ff* (fortissimo). The score concludes with a final chord in the vocal parts and a sustained chord in the Elect. part.

Come away, death

For Soloist, SATB Choir, and
Fixed Media

Text by: William Shakespeare

Zack Pentecost

The solo may be, if desired,
broken up between various singers.

Slow Rhythms ad lib

Solo *mf*
Come a - way Come a - way death, _____ death, _____

Soprano *p*
Alto *p* Ah
Tenor *p*
Bass *p*

Electronics
Texture *pp* *p*

All voices freely ad lib crescendo and decrescendo. This should be done individually, and not as a section - as to create a shimmering effect. Voices may also freely drop in and out. Once again, individually and not as a section. The dynamic range (pp - mp)

12
Solo *mf* *mp* *mf*
and in sad cy - press let me be laid. Fly a - way

S
A
T
B

Throughout the rest of the piece, ad lib syllables / words from the solo line around the current measure.

23
Solo *mp* *f*
Fly a - way breath; _____ breath; _____ I am slain _____

S
A
T
B

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Come away, death

2

34 *mf* *p* *mp*

Solo I am slain by a fair cruel maid. My shroud of white, stuck all

S A T B

45 *mf* *p* *mf*

Solo with yew My shroud of white, stuck all with yew Oh, pre - pare

S A T B

56 *ff* *p* *mf*

Solo it! Oh, pre - pare it! My part of death, no one so true

S A T B

67 *mp* *mf* *f*

Solo Not a flow - er Not a flow - er sweet,

S A T B

Come away, death

3

78 *mf* *f* *mf* *p* *p*

Solo On my black cof - fin let there be let there be strown. Not a friend

S A T B

89 *mp* *mf*

Solo Not a friend greet My poor corpse Not a friend

100 *f* *mf* *ff*

Solo greet My poor corpse where my bones shall be thrown

S A T B

111 *mf* *f* *p* *p* *f*

Solo A thou - sand thou - sand sighs to save Lay me, O, where

Come away, death

4

122

mf *f* *mf* *f*

Solo

Sad true lov - er ne - ver find my grave To weep there!

S

A

T

B

133

mf *p* *pp* *pp*

Solo

To weep there! To weep there!

S

A

T

B

Elect.

If the solo finishes before the electronics end, the electronics may be faded out or left on for the duration of the piece. Conversely, if the electronics finish before the text, the electronic portion may remain silent.

ca. 6' -

Alleluia

For SATB Choir, and
Fixed Media (or Organ)

Zack Pentecost

$\text{♩} = 76$

Soprano *mf* Al - le - lu - ia

Alto *mf* Al - le - lu - ia

Tenor 8

Bass

Electronics or Organ *mp*

9

S *f* Al - le -

A *f* Al - le -

T *mf* Al - le - lu - ia *f* Al - le -

B *mf* Al - le - lu - ia *f* Al - le -

Elect.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 9 through 12 of the piece 'Alleluia'. The score is written for SATB choir and electronics/organ. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 76. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are 'Al - le - lu - ia'. The dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to forte (f). The electronics/organ part provides accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The choir parts are for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The Tenor and Bass parts have an octave sign (8) indicating they are an octave lower than written.

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Alleluia

2

17

S *mf* Al-le-lu-ia

A *mf* Al-le-lu-ia

T *mf* Al-le-lu-ia

B *mf* Al-le-lu-ia

Elect. *p*

25

S *f* Al-le-lu-ia

A *f* Al-le-lu-ia

T *f* Al-le-lu-ia

B *mf* Al-le-lu-ia

Elect. *mp*

Alleluia

3

30

f

S

Al - le - lu - ia

f

A

Al - le - lu - ia

ff

T

Al - le - lu - ia

f

B

Al - le - lu - ia

f

Elect.

mf

34

mf

S

Al - le - lu - ia

f

A

Al - le - lu - ia

mf

T

Al - le - lu - ia

f

B

Al - le - lu - ia

f

Elect.

p

Alleluia

4

37

S *mf* ia Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia

A *f* Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia *mf*

T *f* Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia *mf* Al - le - lu - ia *f*

B *mf* Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia *mf* Al - le - lu - ia *f*

Elect.

40

S *f* Al - le - lu - ia *ff* Al - le - lu - ia

A *f* Al - le - lu - ia *ff* Al - le - lu - ia

T *mf* Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia *ff*

B *mf* Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia Al - le - lu - ia *ff*

Elect.

Alleluia

5

45

mf

S

A

T

B

mf

mf

Al - le - lu - ia

Al - le - lu - ia

Al - le - lu - ia

Al - le - lu - ia

Elect.

49

f

S

A

T

B

f

lu - ia

lu - ia

Al - le - lu - ia

Al - le - lu - ia

Al - le - lu - ia

Al - le - lu - ia

Elect.

6

Elect.

Elect.

Alleluia

7

61

S *All mf* Al - le - lu - ia *p*

A *mf* Al - le - lu - ia *p*

T *mf* Al - le - lu - ia *p*

B *All mf* Al - le - lu - ia *p*

Elect. *p*

65

Elect. *mf*

67

Elect. *f*

69

Elect. *p*

72

Elect. *pp*

APPENDIX C: Audio Recordings

Recordings for this project can be found at: <https://soundcloud.com/zack-pentecost/sets/music-for-choir-and>

Vita

Zack Pentecost (1990) is a composer and sound designer, originally from Springfield, TN now based in Minneapolis, MN where he is currently pursuing a PhD in Music with a concentration in composition at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. His current interests are in creating new works for classical guitar, electronics, choir, small chamber ensembles, and incorporating electronic elements into works for large ensembles.

Before moving to Minneapolis, Zack completed a Master's of Music in composition at the University of Tennessee Knoxville, and a Bachelor's degree in music with an emphasis in music composition at Austin Peay State University in Clarksville, TN.